

**DePaul University**  
**School for New Learning**  
**HC 399 Election 2008: The Whole World is Watching**  
**Fall Quarter 2008**  
**Loop Campus - Wednesday 6 -9**  
**Room ?**  
**Maureen Dolan, Swami Shraddhananda**  
**Phone: 773.282.4908**  
**[mdolan1149@aol.com](mailto:mdolan1149@aol.com)**

**Election 2008: The Whole World is Watching ---Course Description**

With the 2008 campaign for President in full swing, the entire world is waiting to see if there will be a shift of power in the world's superpower. In the exciting and historic primary season we witnessed how an African American man and a Caucasian woman could run for the highest office and how they garnered millions of votes. For the general election - How are the candidates speaking to the main issues like the war in Iraq, the economy, healthcare, global warming/climate crisis? What are the trends in voter registration and turnout? How does the electoral count get figured? What problems have come up in counting the votes in the past? Who decided the 2000 and 2004 elections? How are other countries viewing American elections? This course examines the "who, what, where, when, how, and why" of the present election process. We will read the book, *Choosing the President 2008: Citizens Guide to the Electoral Process* by the League of Women Voters, *The Constitution and Bill of Rights of the U.S.*, and other websites and articles. Other experiential learning will enhance the readings, including watching the debates.

H1C - Can explain the emergence, maintenance or evolution of an economic or political system

H2F - Can explain the development, roles and maintenance of social institutions.

H4 - Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural or economic groups in the U.S.

OTHER competencies could be negotiated.

**Faculty Biographical Sketch**

Maureen Dolan, Swami Shraddhananda, is an ordained priest and a certified Hatha Yoga Teacher, and has taught the following DePaul School for New Learning courses: "Women's Voices in Peacemaking;" "Cooperatives: Building Communities of Peace and Justice;" "Election 2004: The Whole World is Watching;" "Global Futures: Oil, Water, War, and Peace," "Body, Mind, Spirit: Yoga and Meditation," and the "Gandhi Non-Violence Conference" travel course. She also teaches the PAX Intro to Peace, Conflict Resolution and Social Justice for the peace and justice minor. She also serves as Adjunct Interfaith Chaplain for the University Ministry. She has been teaching yoga and meditation for several years at YMCAs, retreats, workshops, and at DePaul University for over seven years. For about 40 years, she has been engaged in social justice work in the peace movement, union organizing, community coalitions, and women's organizations and worked on several electoral campaigns. She has served as Executive Director of the Chicago Electric Options Campaign, and as Executive Director of Women United for a Better Chicago; Assistant Director of the Public Interest Law Initiative; Coordinator of Artemisia Gallery; Recording Secretary and Co-Chair of the Political Action Committee for the UWA-UE union; Co-Chair of the Eighth Congressional District Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign; member of the Spiritual Life Task Force of the Parliament of World Religions; served on numerous boards of peace and justice organizations, including the Chicago Mutual Housing Network; published several articles on peace and justice issues, and is currently working on a book. She initiated and founded, with eleven other people, the Logan Square Housing Cooperative. She is currently working on her PhD in Transformative Studies. Maureen also has two grown sons who work in the social justice arena.

## **Competence Offerings for the Course**

### **H1C - Can explain the emergence, maintenance or evolution of an economic or political system.**

1. Identifies a political system or economic system and describes its elements.
2. Explains how the system functions and how it has changed over time.

Students demonstrate this competence through an understanding of the origins, functioning, and change over time of an economic or political system. An economic system refers broadly to a system of production, exchange, and distribution of resources that are critical for the survival of a whole society. A Political system is the set of formal legal institutions that constitute a government or a state.

### **H2F - Can explain the development, roles and maintenance of social institutions.**

1. Identifies and describes a specific social institution(s).
2. Analyzes the dynamics of the development and change of this social institution(s).

Students demonstrate this competence by showing how it contributes to their interaction and relationships with institutions. They will need to demonstrate a theoretical understanding of the changing nature of institutions in society. A presentation of independent or prior learning for this competence should identify a specific institution that fits the accepted definition and describe its development through examples.

### **H4 - Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural or economic groups in the U.S.**

1. Describes the unequal power relations between at least two racial, social, cultural or economic groups in the U.S.
2. Discusses the historical, sociological, or economic dynamics under which these groups came to be in conflict.

Students demonstrate this competence by analyzing the historical, sociological or economic dynamics that lead to inequalities in power among groups in the U.S. To the extent possible, we hope that students will relate this to their experiences as well as their responsibilities as citizens. In many ways, this competence is about democracy in action; for example, how groups have negotiated and attained power and voice in a complex and diverse society. Since, however, inequalities persist in this country, it is important to understand the ways in which some groups have been systematically denied economic, social and political justice.

**Other competences can be negotiated.**

## **OUTCOMES**

### **For those with H1C:**

**A basic understanding of the US Constitution and Bill of Rights, the three branches of government, and the electoral process of our political system. Students can describe how the political system and voting rights have changed over time in the US.**

### **For those with H2F:**

**Can describe a social institution that helps people understand their rights under the Constitution and Bill of Rights OR helps people with their voting rights. Examples include: NAACP, ACLU, League of Women Voters, etc.**

### **For those with H4:**

**Can describe the unequal power relations over time in voting among racial, social, cultural or economic groups in US. Can discuss the historical, sociological, or economic dynamics of conflict over voting rights.**

**ALL Students will come to a better understanding of the -- history and -- process of present election in the US and be better informed for participation as citizens.**

### **EVIDENCE STUDENT WILL SUBMIT:**

- 1) **Attend class and participate. If you will be late or absent, contact teacher first.**
- 2) **Read and be able to discuss the two books and the articles and websites assigned.**
- 3) **Do research, work cooperatively, and give a presentation in class with a small group.**
- 4) **Submit 5 reflection papers on time.**
- 5) **Watch and discuss debates.**

### **The Learning Experience**

The 2008 U.S. Presidential election holds great importance nationally and internationally and this course gives an overview of what is at stake. Through assigned readings and discussions, small group projects, investigations on websites and other sources, guest speakers, video, we will explore: the history of elections, the demographics of American voters, backgrounds on the candidates, information from the Republican and National Conventions, and the presidential and vice presidential debates. Research will include investigation into how people in other countries view this election; assessing the roles of issues, money and groups in backing the candidates; and how elections are decided in this country. Study includes reading *Choosing the President 2008: Citizens Guide to the Electoral Process* by the League of Women Voters and *The Constitution and Bill of Rights of the U.S.* Small group projects, 5 journal reflections of 2 pages each, and class discussions are included.

### **Required Reading & Resource Materials (may be amended):**

League of Women Voters. *Choosing the President 2008*. Lyons Press: Guilford, CT, 2008. ISBN 978-1-59921-214-2  
*US Constitution and Bill of Rights* Naperville IL: Oak Hill, 2007. ISBN -10-891743-00-7  
Various websites and other handouts

### **Attendance and Participation**

A substantial percentage of the final grade relates directly to attendance and participation. Regular attendance is therefore required, and classroom participation in discussion and activities is essential to success in completing the course. If you anticipate missing more than one class session in the quarter, it would be best for you not to enroll in this course.

### **Weekly Work Load**

Students should anticipate spending approximately four hours per week on assigned readings and other requirements.

### **Course Requirements**

Regular classroom participation.  
5 two page journal reflections on readings and experiences.  
Small group project and presentation.

### **Academic Integrity**

It is expected that all students will adhere to DePaul University's policy on academic integrity. The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: A) the direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs, or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. B) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgment. C) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency D) the paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment or of the course. If you are unsure of how to cite a source, just ASK.

### **Criteria for Assessment**

Grades will be determined by the following criteria:

Class attendance and participation	25%
Written assignments	50% (Five 2 page journal reflections)
Small group project and presentation in class	25%

### **Written Work will be evaluated as follows:**

A= designates work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of idea.

B= designates work of good quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas.

C= designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete.

D= designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas., grammar, and spelling; may indicate that student has not done reading assignments or research thoroughly.

### **PASS/FAIL**

If a student wants a Pass/Fail, teacher must be notified by **SECOND** Week and not later.

### **INCOMPLETE**

Unfinished work or work requiring revision will be given an Incomplete grade with proper procedures followed. In order to qualify for the IN, students must have regularly attended class, and must have completed two thirds of assignments. Application for Incomplete must be made in writing to teacher by 9<sup>th</sup> week of class.

Students who may need an accommodation based on impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. All discussions remain confidential.

Websites: (to be amended)

commondreams.org

altnet.org

truthout.org

c-span.org (then click on "2008 vote")

pollingreport.org

websites of candidates and parties

websites of **NAACP, ACLU, League of Women Voters, etc.**

New York times on line

## **REFLECTION PAPERS:**

**Each reflection paper is at least two full pages and at least 5 paragraphs long and must be turned in on time. If you have not taken a writing course OR have difficulty writing OR have several corrections from teacher, then GO TO DePaul WRITING CENTER online or in person.**

### REFLECTION #1:

Pick one brief quote from *Choosing the President* and say why it is important to you. Describe the most important issues to you in this election (economy, war in Iraq, healthcare, climate crisis, civil liberties or anything else). Name the websites, TV news shows, newspapers, magazines, or blogs where you get your information on current events and elections right now. **HAND IN AT 2<sup>nd</sup> class.**

### Reflection #2:

Pick one Presidential candidate and describe his position on at least 3 issues of importance to you. Explain why these issues are important to you. Name where you received the information about the candidate. **HAND IN AT 3<sup>rd</sup> class**

### Reflection #3

Who is your Congressional Representative? Who is running in your Congressional District? Describe the differences between the two candidates on at least one issue of concern to you. For extra credit: write to your Congressperson about something of concern to you. **HAND IN AT 4<sup>th</sup> class**

### Reflection #4

Pick a quote from an article about the election on [commondreams.org](http://commondreams.org) or [truthout.org](http://truthout.org) and write your thoughts about it. Or pick a quote from the NAACP, ACLU or League of Women Voters websites and write about it. **HAND IN AT 5<sup>th</sup> class**

### Reflection #5

Pick a quote from *the Constitution or the Bill of Rights* that is important to you and write about it. **HAND IN AT 6<sup>th</sup> class.**

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

H1C: Investigate how the political system has evolved regarding elections. Who was allowed to vote when in the history of the US? What brought about the changes in who could vote?

H1C: Name the three branches of US Federal government and describe how many in the main posts of each. How has the interpretation of the Constitution changed over the last two Presidential terms? Give at least 3 examples.

H2F: Pick one or two social institutions that have helped people gain the right to vote and describe what they did.

H4: Examine and describe the differences in voting patterns of African Americans, Latinos, and whites in 2000, 2004, 2008. Give examples of how foreign news outlets are covering the US elections.

H4: Examine and describe cultural or economic voting blocks in 2000 and 2004 and 2008. Give examples from foreign press about the US elections.

## **Course Schedule**

Week 1 September 10

- \* Course Introduction
- \* Centering techniques
- \* Large Group Discussion-DNC and RNC
- \* Assignment for Week 2- **Read Chapter 1 and 2 of**

**Choosing the President 2008-League of Women Voters**

**Write Reflection #1**

**Various websites and other handouts**

**Sign up for New York Times on line**

Week 2 September 17

- \* Centering techniques
- \* Lecture
- \* Small Group project
- \* Large Group Discussion
- \* **Hand In Reflection #1**

\* Assignment for Week 3- **Read Chapter 3 and 4 of**

**Choosing the President 2008-League of Women Voters**  
**Write Reflection #2**  
**Various websites and other handouts**

Week 3 September 24

- \* Centering techniques
- \* **Hand In Reflection #2**
- \* Large Group Discussion
- \* Video "Uncounted"

\* Assignment for Week 4- **Read Chapters 5 and 6 of**

**Choosing the President 2008-League of Women Voters**  
**Various websites and other handouts**  
**Write Reflection #3**  
**WATCH First presidential debate: Friday, September 26**

Week 4 October 1

- \* Centering techniques
- \* Large Group Discussion
- \* Hand in **Reflection #3**
- \* Assignment for Week 5-

**Read Chapters 7 and 8 of**  
**Choosing the President 2008-League of Women Voters**  
**Write Reflection #4**  
**Watch Vice Presidential debate: Thursday, October 2**  
**Second presidential debate: Tuesday, October 7**

Week 5 October 8

- \* Centering techniques
- \* Lecture
- \* hand in **Reflection #4**
- \* Large and small group Discussion Read Constitution and Bill of Rights

\* Assignment for Week 6-

**Read Chapters Chapters 9 and 10 of**  
**Choosing the President 2008-League of Women Voters**  
**Write Reflection #5**

Week 6 October 15

- \* Centering techniques
- \* Hand in **Reflection #5**
- \* Small Group project
- \* Large Group Discussion IN CLASS--**Third presidential debate: Wednesday, October 15**

\* Assignment for Week 7- **Work on small group projects**  
**Read Constitution and Bill of Rights**  
**Various websites and other handouts**

Week 7 October 22

- \* Centering techniques
- \* Small Group project
- \* Large Group Discussion
- \* Assignment for Week 8 **Read and study *Constitution and Bill of Rights***  
**Work on small group project**  
**Various websites and other handouts**

Week 8 October 29

- \* Centering techniques
- \* Small Group project
- \* Large Group Discussion
- \* Assignment for Week 9- **Read and study *Constitution and Bill of Rights***  
**Various websites and other handouts**  
**Work on small group project**  
**Election November 4 VOTE**

Week 9 November 5

- \* Centering techniques
- \* Election discussion
- \* Small Group projects
- \* Assignment for Week 10 **Read and study *Constitution and Bill of Rights***  
**Various websites and other handouts**  
**Work on small group project**

Week 10 November 12

- \* Centering
- \* Review
- \* Small Group projects
- \* Discussions
- \* **Evaluations**